DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 455 IR 057 726

AUTHOR	Takeuchi, Hiroya; Kim, Yong Won
TITLE	Current Issues in Library and Information Science Profession and Its Education in Japan.
PUB DATE	1999-08-00
NOTE	7p.; In: IFLA Council and General Conference. Conference Programme and Proceedings (65th, Bangkok, Thailand, August 20-28, 1999); see IR 057 674.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla65/papers/151-115e.htm.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Development; Curriculum Development; *Educational Quality; *Employment Patterns; Employment Qualifications; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Information Science Education; *Librarians; Library Schools; *Library Science; Occupational Information
IDENTIFIERS	Japan

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the elements affecting the weakness of the library and information science (LIS) profession in Japan in terms of quality of education, the employment system, and career development of Japanese librarians. It also provides an overview of the current status of LIS education in Japan and examines the implications of the rapid growth of this field while noting some of its significant issues and problems. The first section of the paper is an introduction. The second section outlines the legal qualifications of librarians in Japan. The third section describes LIS education in Japan, including historical background, educational institutions, curriculum, and students. The fourth section addresses issues and problems, including development, employment of graduates, and career development. (Contains 14 references.) (MES)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 441 455

IFLANET Search Contacts
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
Annual Conference

65th IFLA Council and General Conference

Bangkok, Thailand, August 20 - August 28, 1999

Conference Proceedings

Code Number: 151-115-E
Division Number: VII
Professional Group: Education and Training
Joint Meeting with: -
Meeting Number: 115
Simultaneous Interpretation: *Yes*

Current Issues in Library and Information Science Profession and its Education in Japan

Hiroya TAKEUCHI
University of Shizuoka, Hamamatsu College
Shizuoka, 432-8012 Japan
E-mail: takeutir@ham.t.u-shizuoka-ken.ac.jp
fax: +81-53-457-4555

Yong Won KIM
Faculty of Cultural Information Resources
Surugadai University, Japan
E-mail: kimyw@surugadai.ac.jp
fax: +81-429-74-7123

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A.L. Van Wesermael

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Abstract

More than 200 Japanese colleges and universities including junior colleges provide "20-credit librarianship courses" qualified under the Library Law and produce more than 10,000 "qualified" librarians annually. The Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture governs qualifications and education of librarians and certifies the levels of librarian and assistant librarian as they meet the conditions indicated in the Library Law. There are 9 four-year universities with departments or sections specialized in library and information science and 8 master's and 4 doctoral programs in Japan. However it is recognized that the Library and Information Science(LIS) profession in Japan is still weak. In this paper the authors tried to analyze the elements affecting the weakness in terms of quality of education, employment system and career development of Japanese librarians.

IR057726

Paper

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2

I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the elements affecting the weakness of the LIS profession in Japan in terms of quality of education, employment system and career development of Japanese librarians. It also provides an overview of the current status of the library and information science education in Japan, and examines the implications of the rapid growth of this field while noting some of its significant issues and problems.

II. The Legal Qualifications of Librarians

The goal of library and information science education is to produce qualified librarians. According to Japan's Library Law, which is actually the public library law and was enacted in 1950, qualified or professional librarians are classified as librarian(shisho) or assistant librarian(shishoho). The requisite qualifications are :

Article 4:
The professional staff is called librarian(shisho) or assistant librarian(shishoho). The librarian should engage in professional work. The assistant librarian should assist the librarian.

Article 5:
Qualifications of librarians and assistant librarians.

1. *A person is qualified as a librarian provided one of the following conditions is met:*
    i. *a graduate of a university or technical college who has completed a training program stipulated by Article 6 of the Law.*
    ii. *a graduate of a university who has studied courses in library science offered by the university.*
    iii. *a person with work experience as an assistant librarian for more than three years(including staff of the National Diet Library and university libraries who are equivalent with assistant librarian)who has completed a training program stipulated in Article 6.*
2. *A person is qualified as an assistant librarian provided one of the following conditions is met:*
    i. *a person with qualification for librarian*
    ii. *a graduate of a high school who has completed a training program stipulated in Article 6.*

Article 6:
Training program for librarians and assistant librarians.

1. *A training program for librarian and assistant librarian is given by universities in compliance with the request by the Minister of Education, Science, Sports and Culture*
2. *Courses, credit units, and other necessary matters should be specified by ordinance of the Ministry. Minimum credits should be 15.*

According to the ordinance issued by the Ministry in August 1996, however, 20 credits must be acquired. The Ministry governs the qualifications and education of librarians and certifies the levels of librarians and assistants of librarians as they meet the conditions indicated in the Library Law.

Teacher-librarian(shisho-kyoyu) must also met the qualifications set forth in the School Library Law. Graduates who have teacher's certificates and have taken selected courses at a university or college are entitled to a shisho-kyoyu certificates as well.

III. LIS Education in Japan

1. Historical Background

The Library Law opened the door for the LIS education at university level in Japan. Toyo University started its librarianship course under the Department of Sociology in 1950. What we would call formal, professional education of librarians, however, began in 1951 at the Japan Library School, today's School of Library and Information Science at Keio University. This was the first comprehensive, university-level program for librarians in Japan. The School began under the auspices of the American Library Association.

Further progress was made in the late 1960s when the Keio University's library school added a two-year master's program in 1967 with a curriculum that placed more emphasis on "information". Keio University similarly revised its undergraduate curriculum in 1968 and added the words "Information Science" to the name of its library school. In 1975, the school introduced a doctoral program, the first in Japan, to educate highly qualified personnel for research, education, and other professional positions in the field of library and information. Its curriculum emphasized research as well as service.

Another significant development in library education occurred in 1979 when the National Junior College for Librarianship, established in 1954 by the Ministry of Education, became the University of Library and Information Science (ULIS). While called a university, it is a college in the American sense. Still, it is the only independent, national institution of higher education devoted solely to library and information science. It offers a four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree(Gakugei gakushi), and since 1984, additional course work for a master's degree. ULIS has planned to establish a doctoral program and is waiting for the approval by the Ministry.

Some other Japanese universities continue to offer degree programs in librarianship. Aichi Shukutoku University, for examples, formed library and information science departments in 1985 and started master's and doctoral programs in 1989 and 1991 respectively. One of the most recent is Surugadai University which, in 1994, opened a Faculty of Cultural Information Resources. Its purpose was to stimulate and promote research in the additional fields of information science by offering professional training in archival science, record management, and museum curatorship as well as librarianship. The Surugadai University started a master's degree program in 1999.

2. Educational Institutions

Including the above-mentioned departments/faculty, there are 9 four-year universities with departments or sections specialized in library and information science and 8 master's and 4 doctoral programs in Japan. In addition, there are some 200 colleges and universities, including junior colleges, offering a varying number of courses in librarianship. However, the majority of these schools offer a very limited, minimum 20-credit courses prescribed in the Library Law and the Ministry's ordinance attached to the Law. Moreover, summer intensive 20-credit courses, which are mainly for non-qualified library workers, are organized by several (11 in 1998 and 10 in 1999) universities/colleges in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture annually. These summer courses are also recognized as qualifying education for library profession in the Library Law.

3. Curriculum.

Education for librarians in Japan has been provided at different levels. Students are required to complete no less than 124 credits over four years and submit a thesis in their final semester for a Bachelor degree. Students of a library and information science department receive a bachelor of either arts or art and science, along with a certificate of "qualified librarian " upon request. There is a big gap between the quality of education in the LIS departments providing comprehensive programs and the ones offered in the 20-credit courses.

4. Students

One criterion for success of professional education is the number of graduates entering the profession. In Japan, approximately 10,000 "qualified" librarians are produced under the Library Law yearly. Summer training courses produce an additional 1,000 librarians annually.

IV. Issues and Problems

Despite progress in educating librarians and information specialists, Japan faces several problems in library and information science education and profession. Three of the major areas are summarized below.

1. Curriculum development:

While more than 200 Japanese universities, colleges, and junior colleges offer some kind of library science course, the number of subjects taught is limited. Course offerings barely meet the government requirements for certification of professional librarians or teacher-librarians. These minimal requirements are lower than in other developed countries of the world. The number of information-related courses offered in colleges and universities will be accelerated, but they will be concentrated more in computer science and business administration than in library science.

The University Standards Association of Japan?Daigaku Kijun Kyokai?issued "Standards for Education for Librarianship" in 1954 (now called "Standards for Education of Library and Information Science). They call for 38 credits. The Standards are accepted in principle by the profession, but lack the necessary legal force for application. It is crucial for the library profession in Japan to define the evolving responsibilities of information professionals in an information society, and to agree upon the requirements for qualifying specialists in a rapidly changing field.

2. Employment of Graduates

Only three to four percent of all qualified graduates find employment in libraries. The reminders are employed in other fields. This low rate of professional employment in the field for which students have studied clearly implies that there should be careful planning to limit the number of graduates having similar qualifications and competencies.

In addition to professional qualifications, librarians working for national and public libraries must pass civil service examinations for public official status. The Bureau of Personnel conducts the examination in the subject of librarianship in the category II of the scheme. in order to employ the library staff of the national universities and other central governmental organizations. In this examination, the certificate of librarianship is not always required for the candidates, but the graduates of the LIS departments occupy the big portion of the successful candidates. Many local authorities responsible for their public libraries, on the other hand, tend to hire librarians as general administration staff, because the Japanese bureaucracy generally does not like to have specialists in their systems. The fact that the qualification of librarianship can be obtained easily through the summer courses also spurs on such tendency. Under such circumstances, the graduates form the LIS departments tend to lose the competitions with other candidates who major in public administration or law in universities. It is reported that only some 50% of the library workers in public libraries have the certificate of librarianship in Japan.

3. Career Development

We understand that professionals generally move from one place to another, in many cases from a small organization to a big one, in some case with promotion, and gain experience and

brush up their professional skills and knowledge. In Japan, however, the mobility of librarians is very low. It would be because the life-long employment habit is still very rigid, specially for the civil servants in Japan. If there is only one library under the local government, the librarians will work for the same library up to their retirement age. This means that the librarians in Japan generally lack the opportunities to develop their professional skills and knowledge to improve their services by having many kinds of experiences. Instead, many librarians working in the public libraries are forced to move to other departments out of the libraries under the same local authorities to have more experience and administrative skills. Librarians working in the national university libraries exceptionally have such opportunities of moving because the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture is responsible for the administrations including the personnel issue of all the national universities.

V. Conclusion

It seems that there is a chain starting the over production of qualified "professional" librarian, which leads to the low recognition of library profession. Such low recognition results in the less opportunity of the employment of the well-trained librarians. In order to improve the status of library profession, hence the quality of library services in Japan, this chain should be cut. Unfortunately, the over production will continue and there is little chance for raising the qualifications for certification in the near future. Graduates of library and information science programs can be expected to continue seeking jobs in business and industry after graduation. The schools, therefore, should try to equip their students with the skills and knowledge for solving the employment problems inherent in this type of job market.

It becomes more important to provide the systematic continuing education for librarians to improve their skill, otherwise they will not be able to keep current with the rapidly changes in the field. It is clear that digital information can be more effective for the users and cheaper for information professionals. Information and communication technologies including networking have had the bigger impact to the library services for the recent years. We need professionals who can function not only in existing library and information environments, but who can also design, build, and manage new digital information systems and services from a human-centered perspective. We must take actions immediately in order not the libraries to be info-poor places in the info-rich world.

References:

1. Buckland, Michael K. "Education for Librarianship in the Next Century," Library Trends. Vol.39(1986): p.777-788.

2. Derr, Richard L. "Educational Concepts in Library Science," Journal of Education for Librarianship. Vol.21, No.2(1980), p.135-143

3. Fujikawa, Masanobu. "Toshokan Johogaku no Genjo to Shorai: Shokugyo Kyoiku to Kenkyu Kyoiku no Hazamade", Gendai no Toshokan (Libraries Today) Vol.24, No.1 (1986), p.11-15. (Text in Japanese.)

4. Garrison, Guy. "Challenges to Information Science Education". Journal of American Society for Information Science. Vol.39, No.5(1988), p.362-366.

5. Yong Won Kim. " Library and Information Science Education; Trends and Issues". Library and Information Science. No.30(1992), p.115-131. (Text in Japanese.)

6. Miura, Itsuo. et .al. "Daigaku Toshokanin no Chisiki Besu to Toshokan Kyoiku,?,? (Knowledge Bases for Academic Librarians and Library Education?,?) Toshokan Gakkai Nenpo (Annals of Japan Society of Library Science) Vol. 37, No.2(1991),p.49-63, No.3(1991), p.103-116. (Text in Japanese.)

7. Moll,Joy K. & B.J.Flood. "Information Science and Information-Related Educational Programs." Journal of American Society for Information Science. Vol.39, No.5(1988), p.318-321.

8. Nihon Toshokan Kyokai(Japan Library Association). Nihon no Toshokan Johogaku Kyoiku (Education of Library and Information Science in Japan). 1995, 239p. (Text in Japanese.)

9. Pemberton, J.M. & C. R. Nugent. " Information Studies: Emergent Field, Convergent Curriculum," Journal of Education for Library and Information Science. Vol.36, No.2(1995), p.126-137.

10. Stieg, Magaret. Change and Challenge in Library and Information Science Education. Chicago, American Library Association, 1991, 206p.

11. Minai, Hideki.. "Study of the Provision on Professional Personnel of the Library Law: the Article 4, Article 5, Article 13.,"?Toshokan gakkai Nenpo (Annals of Japan Society of Library Science) Vol.43, No.2(1997), p.63-78. (Text in Japanese.)

12. Totten,Herman L.,ed. The Management of Library and Information Studies Education. New York, The Haworth Press,Inc. 1992, 220p.

13. Tsuda, Yoshinari. Future Trends in Library and Information Science Education in Japan. Library and Information Science Education: An International Symposium. Metuchen, The Scarecrow Press, 1987, p.237-244.

14. Yong Won Kim, "Library and Information Science Education in Japan", World Libraries, vol 8, No. 2(1998), p.39-49.

Latest Revision: *September 28, 1999*

Copyright © 1995-1999
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
www.ifla.org